

**READING ACHIEVEMENT IN ELEMENTARY
SCHOOLS - KINDERGARTEN THROUGH
GRADE THREE**

2001 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Sponsor: Karen W. Morgan

This act modifies provisions related to the State System of Public Education by setting a goal of having 90% or more of all third graders reading on or above grade level by the end of the third grade by 2006. The act requires an annual report on the percentage of students reading on or above grade level in the first, second, and third grades by school and by school district. The act requires each elementary school to develop a plan to achieve the reading goal and requires the plan to have assessment, intervention, and reporting components.

This act affects sections of Utah Code Annotated 1953 as follows:

AMENDS:

53A-1-606.5, as enacted by Chapter 57, Laws of Utah 1999

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **53A-1-606.5** is amended to read:

53A-1-606.5. Reading achievement in grades one through three -- Monitoring -- Reporting -- Additional instruction.

(1) (a) The Legislature recognizes that:

(i) reading is the most fundamental skill, the gateway to knowledge and lifelong learning;

(ii) there is an ever increasing demand for literacy in the highly technological society we live in;

(iii) students who do not learn to read will be economically and socially disadvantaged;

(iv) reading problems exist in almost every classroom;

(v) almost all reading failure is preventable if reading difficulties are diagnosed and treated by no later than the end of the third grade; and



28 (vi) early identification and treatment of reading difficulties can result in students learning
29 to read by the end of the third grade.

30 (b) It is therefore [a]:

31 (i) the long-term goal of the state to have every student in the state's public education
32 system reading on or above grade level by the end of the third grade[-]; and

33 (ii) the short-term goal of the state to have 90% or more of all third graders reading on or
34 above grade level by the end of the third grade in 2006.

35 (c) (i) The superintendent of public instruction or the superintendent's designee shall make
36 an annual report to the Legislature's Education Interim Committee on the goals established in
37 Subsection (1)(b).

38 (ii) The information reported shall begin with the 2001-02 school year and include the
39 following for each school district and elementary school:

40 (A) the number and percent of all students reading on or above grade level at the end of
41 the first, second, and third grades;

42 (B) the annual reading achievement growth from the prior year and cumulative reading
43 achievement growth from the base year of 2001-02 in the percent of students reading on or above
44 grade level for each year;

45 (C) those schools that reach the 90% reading achievement goal or achieve at least an 8%
46 cumulative growth from the 2001-02 base year or do both; and

47 (D) those elementary schools that fail to achieve at least a 3% cumulative growth from the
48 2001-02 base year.

49 (d) The State Board of Education, through the superintendent of public instruction, shall
50 determine:

51 (i) the appropriate statewide tests to assess reading levels at the end of each year in the
52 first, second, and third grades;

53 (ii) an appropriate standard or cut score on each assessment for determining grade level
54 reading mastery; and

55 (iii) the actual percent of students reading on or above grade level in the first, second, and
56 third grades at each public elementary school as required under Subsection (1)(c)(i) by dividing
57 the headcount enrollment of students reading on or above grade level at that grade by the
58 headcount enrollment of students in the building at that grade on the date that the reading

59 assessment is administered.

60 (2) ~~[In order to ensure that all students are reading on or above the third grade level by the~~
61 ~~end of the third grade, the]~~ The State Board of Education and local school boards shall work with
62 ~~[the Legislature, through its interim committees and any task force that may be created to study~~
63 ~~and review accountability in public education]~~ their respective elementary schools to develop a
64 reading achievement plan to meet the goal set in Subsection (1)(b).

65 (3) (a) Each school district shall ~~[work with]~~ require the elementary schools within its
66 district boundaries to develop a ~~[school]~~ reading achievement plan at each school ~~[focused on~~
67 ~~having all students reading at the third grade level by the end of the third grade]~~ for its
68 kindergarten, first, second, and third graders to reach the reading goals set in Subsection (1)(b).

69 (b) The goals shall be the top priority of each elementary school for its kindergarten, first,
70 second, and third grade students.

71 (c) The school principal shall take primary responsibility to provide leadership and secure
72 resources and support for teachers and students, most particularly for those who are reading below
73 grade level, to achieve the reading goals.

74 (d) Each reading achievement plan shall include:

75 (i) an assessment component that:

76 (A) identifies those students who are reading below grade level;

77 (B) uses beginning of year and end of year assessments to determine each student's reading
78 skills; and

79 (C) is consistent with the exemption provisions of Subsection 53A-1-603(3)(c) regarding
80 such students as students with disabilities or limited English proficiency;

81 (ii) an intervention component:

82 (A) that provides adequate and appropriate interventions focused on bringing each student
83 up to reading at or above grade level and which requires retention in the grade level of a student
84 reading below grade level;

85 (B) based on best practices identified through proven researched-based methods;

86 (C) that includes parental participation; and

87 (D) that, as resources allow, involves a reading specialist; and

88 (iii) a reporting component that provides:

89 (A) for parents of students to receive their children's assessment results; and

90 (B) data to be included in the school performance report required under Section
91 53A-3-602.5.

92 (4) The school district shall approve each school's plan prior to its implementation and
93 review each plan annually.

Legislative Review Note
as of 1-8-01 10:24 AM

A limited legal review of this legislation raises no obvious constitutional or statutory concerns.

Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel